that slander was current, that makes me wonder whether we should not look in Oxford for traces of the "dark syren." I have very interesting corroborative evidence of this theory which I hope some day to publish.

The same conclusion has been reached through different evidence by Mr. Arthur Acheson, who prints in the appendix to his book *Mistress Davenant* the old satirical poem, "Willobie his Avisa" (1594). This poem contains the first printed allusion to Shakespeare as the author of "Lucrece," and deals with the courtship of the "Brittish Lucrece," Hostess of the George tavern in Oxford, by a young nobleman, Mr. H. W., also called "Harry," and an old player W. S. "Willobie his Avisa" is a dull and scurrilous pamphlet, but the fact that it was forbidden by the London censor shows that it was highly offensive to some one in authority, and it seems quite reasonable to suppose that this lengthy and ponderous dramatic dialogue gives us the key to the personalities, as its story shows in base and vulgar form a parody of the Tragic Drama of the Sonnets.

None who hears the cry of remorse and anguish in Shakespeare's poems can doubt that their author traversed a period of great moral suffering.

The serene atmosphere of his later work seems to attest that he came through the fire tempered and ripened. The facts also sustain this hypothesis and explain his Life's Philosophy, "Men must endure their going hence, even as their coming hither, ripeness is all."

CLARA LONGWORTH DE CHAMBRUN.

A FALLACIOUS THEORY

In your issue of last December, Professor Fisher of Yale discusses "Is the Cost of Living Going Higher?" He shows that the necessities of life have risen fifty per cent. compared with 1895, and concludes that with the yearly large production of gold the cost may go higher and may become unbearable. He presents as a remedy "The stabilization of the gold dollar." In this he is supported by other authorities.

His theory is fallacious, which it is necessary to show, as its agitation may interfere with, defer or annul the current attempts for currency reform, such as happened through agitation for bimetallism in 1894-95.

I have had occasion elsewhere to point out that any surplus gold goes into new enterprises and into commercially backward countries, and that thus any decline in its value is arrested and redressed.

Professor Fisher proposes "a stable dollar," the ratio of which shall be changed periodically, to correspond with a changed "average" of prices of merchandise as per index numbers. In 1895 we were in panic times—other countries were not. We should properly compare prices with 1910, the period before the complaint began here about the higher cost of living. We would find then that prices of commodities have not changed considerably. Moreover, some of the most important ones in aggregate value, such as cotton and wheat, have declined twenty per cent. in recent years, because of larger "supply," while copper and meats have risen as much and more because of a larger "demand." Remedies running counter to natural laws cannot be effective.

Professor Fisher assumes that the value of the dollar is created by the government. But it cannot command how much the dollar will buy in wheat, cotton, or anything. As to the gold dollar it is worth, of course, as much as the gold contained in it. He further states that the government has "arbitrarily" fixed upon the dollar. It is arbitrary only, if anything done from choice is arbitrary. The government chose to put 25¾ grains 9-10 fine gold into the coin. Whatever the coin had been called would not have changed its content or the value of its quantity.

The government has taken the duty on itself to provide the country with the coins it needs. In order that it may get the necessary gold, it has to waive any charge for the coinage. Jewelers and gold exporters usually pay a small bonus to the Treasury to get bars instead of "dollars." The latter may be abraded a trifle, which may, however, aggregate more than the premium paid—another proof that not the stamp but the gold in the coin gives it value.

Professor Fisher proposes that the Treasury should change the ratio of the dollar as compared with itself, quarterly. To fix a ratio means, as stated by him, that it shall buy and sell at the ratio. Compared with the index numbers of 1895, the ratio would have to be fixed at "over" 35 grains. At whatever it be fixed higher than the 25¾ grains contained in the dollar, the Treasury would have to sell the higher weight for each dollar, while gold-miners would not bring gold of a higher weight and take 25¾ grains for it. He brings arguments to the contrary, yet evidently sees that the Treasury would lose interminably the difference in gold. Therefore he proposes that "we can utilize the gold already in the Treasury for redeeming the 900 million gold certificates" (now 1070 million).

If the Treasury were to pay out more gold from that trust fund than a certificate calls for, it would take it from gold held against other certificates. No wonder that he has to state that "space is lacking for any discussion of the exact way in which it would work." Indeed, it is certain it cannot be "worked" at all. With this impracticability the whole scheme goes to pieces irretrievably. No government can make such losing exchanges.

Professor Fisher's intention is laudable enough. He wants somehow to lighten the people's burden of high-living cost, yet the larger supply of gold enables more people to attain a better scale of living than in past ages when gold was scarce.

In fact, the real complaint is that more than formerly the cost of living is higher *here* than in almost any *other* country. No sufficient explanation of this phenomenon has been given by our economists. It can be distinctly demonstrated, however, that it is due to our defective financial system. Moreover, its defects lead to crises or the menace thereof every year and panics in every decade, eventually followed by "bad times" for the people.

Reform of our financial system is thus the vital issue—not the futile agitation for the fallacy of "a stable dollar."

DAVID OCHS.